

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

SCA-01 SCS-03 USIE-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /054 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 468

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2768

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CONSEQUENCES OF UNC-ARMY CONFRONTATION

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2738

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GOVERNMENT HAS REACTED TO THE UNC-ARMY CONFRONTATION IN JUTICALPA, OLANCHO BY FORCIBLY STOPPING THE UNC-SPONSORED HUNGER MARCH ON TEGUCIGALPA. THE NATIONAL POLICE (FSP) RAIDED UNC AND CGT HEADQUARTERS IN TEGUCIGALPA, CONFISCATED LARGE NUMBERS OF DOCUMENTS AND JAILED THE LEADERS OF THE TWO ORGANIZATIONS. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SEVERAL PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AND CATHOLIC PRIESTS OF U.S. NATIONALITY HAVE ALSO BEEN DETAINED BY THE POLICE. THE GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY DECIDED ON VIGOROUS MEASURES TO MAKE CLEAR THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL'S DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. HOWEVER, THE COUNCIL IS NOW FACED WITH MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE ABOUT WHAT POLICIES THE GOVERNMENT WILL FOLLOW IN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

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1. A CONFRONTATION IN JUTICALPA, OLANCHO ON JUNE 25 BETWEEN ARMY TROOPS AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNC (NATIONAL UNION OF CAMPESINOS) RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF FOUR UNC CAMPESINOS, A BYSTANDER AND THE WOUNDING OF TWO OTHER CAMPESINOS. THE

CONFRONTATION DEVELOPED AS PART OF THE UNC-SPONSORED "HUNGER MARCH" DESIGNED TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO COMPLY WITH UNC DEMANDS FOR MORE RAPID LAND DISTRIBUTION AND THE RELEASE OF IMPRISONED CAMPESINOS. THE GOVERNMENT AND UNC ISSUED COMMUNIQUES (SEE REFTEL) PRESENTING THEIR POSITIONS. A SERIES OF CONFLICTING STORIES ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED CONTINUE TO EMERGE AS THE PRESS PUBLISHES THE PERSONAL STATEMENTS OF PEOPLE ON THE SCENE.

2. ARMY TROOPS HAVE OCCUPIED THE CENTRO 18TH OF BEBRERO IN JUTICALPA WHERE THE SHOOTINGS TOOK PLACE. IN OLANCHO THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT ORDERED A CURFEW FROM 6:00 P.M. TO 6:00 A.M., PROHIBITED THE SALE OF ALCOHOL AND FORBIDDEN PUBLIC MEETINGS. ARMY TROOPS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY STOPPED THE HUNGER MARCHERS AND SENT THEM BACK TO THEIR HOMES. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS STATE THAT A NUMBER OF CAMPESINOS WERE BEATEN IN THE OPERATION.

3. THE FSP (FUERZA DE SEGURIDAD PUBLICA) RAIDED THE TEGUCIGALPA OFFICES OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GCT (GENERAL CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS) AND UNC ON THE AFTERNOON OF JUNE 26. THE CENTRO LOYOLA (JESUIT TRAINING CENTER) WAS ALSO RAIDED AND SEARCHED AT THE SAME TIME. OTHER CGT AND UNC OFFICES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY WERE ALSO RAIDED AND, IN SOME CASES, OCCUPIED. DURING THE RAID ON THE CGT AND UNC OFFICES IN TEGUCIGALPA, THE POLICE CONFISCATED LARGE NUMBERS OF DOCUMENTS AND ARRESTED THE ORGANIZATION LEADERS. AMONG THE LEADERS WERE PEDRO MENDOZA (SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNC) AND JULIAN LAGOS (PRESIDENT OF THE CGT), TOGETHER WITH A NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES. THEY ARE PRESENTLY DETAINED AT THE FSP HEADQUARTERS IN TEGUCIGALPA.

4. FOUR REPORTERS AT THE SCENE OF THE RAID WERE ALSO TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THEIR DETENTION CAUSED THE HONDURAN PRESS ASSOCIATION (APH) TO DIRECT A LETTER TO CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR PROTESTING THEIR JAILING AND ASKING GUARANTEES  
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OF PRESS LIBERTY. THE REPORTERS WERE RELEASED WITHIN A SHORT TIME AFTER THEIR DETENTION. RADIO COMMERCIAL WAS ALSO CLOSED DOWN ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 25 BY FSP BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT, IT WAS BROADCASTING INFLAMMATORY STATEMENTS.

5. THE EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT SEVERAL PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS AND CATHOLIC PRIESTS OF U.S. NATIONALITY ARE BEING DETAINED BY FSP. WE ARE ENDEAVORING TO DETERMINE THE EXACT STATUS OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS.

6. MAJOR JOSE ENRIQUE CHINCHILLA, ARMY COMMANDER IN OLANCHO, REPORTEDLY WAS ORDERED TO EXPEL ALL FOREIGN PRIESTS FROM THE DEPART-

MENT. HE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "FIVE PRIESTS AND TWO NUNS WERE EXPELLED BECAUSE THEY WERE CARRYING OUT POLITICAL ACTIVITIES". WE UNDERSTAND THAT SEVERAL OF THOSE PRIESTS ARE U.S. CITIZENS. MONSIGNOR SANTOS, ARCHBISHOP OF TEGUCIGALPA, HAS PUBLICLY PROTESTED THE EXPULSION ORDER AND EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN ABOUT THOSE PRIESTS PRESENTLY BEING DETAINED.

7. VICTOR ARTILES, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE HONDURAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CTH), STATED THAT HE SYMPATHIZED WITH THE DESIRES OF UNC, BUT THAT THE CTH DID NOT SUPPORT THEIR METHODS. ANACH (THE LARGEST CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION) IS AFFILIATED TO THE CTH. HE SAID THAT ANACH WAS NOT WORKING WITH UNC IN THE HUNGER MARCH EVEN THOUGH BOTH SUPPORT SIMILAR GOALS.

8. LIBERAL TIEMPO CARRIED A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL WHICH ASKS, "WHAT DO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS INTEND? TO COVER THE ARMED FORCES WITH BLOOD IN ORDER TO DISCREDIT THEM? UP TO WHAT POINT IS THERE LOYALTY WITHIN CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR'S GOVERNMENT?" THE EDITORIAL ALSO CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT NOT TO REVERT TO REPRESSION TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE NEED FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPOSE "LAW AND ORDER" OR THE COUNTRY WOULD COLLAPSE IN CHAOS. BOTH PAPERS CARRIED A JOINT DECLARATION OF THE LIBERAL AND NATIONAL PARTIES THAT CHARGES THE GOVERNMENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT DISASTROUS SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY, AND CALLS ON IT TO SET A FIRM DATE FOR A RETURN TO FREE ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTION-

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ALITY.

9. COMMENT: THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL HAS ENERGETICALLY CARRIED FORWARD THE PROMISE CONTAINED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S JUNE 25 COMMUNIQUE TO MAINTAIN "LAW AND ORDER". THE STOPPING OF THE HUNGER MARCH AND THE DETENTION OF CGT AND UNC LEADERS IS AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT WEAK OR VACILLATING. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT STILL HAS TO MAKE A DECISION ABOUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE PRESENT AGRARIAN UNREST. A RESORT TO REPRESSION WOULD ONLY CREATE MORE MARTYRS AND BRING THE MILITARY INTO DISREPUTE AS AN INSTITUTION. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ALLOW ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS UNC TO TAKE THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS WITHOUT SUFFERING AN IRREPRABLE LOSS OF AUTHORITY. THEREFORE, THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL WILL HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE ABOUT WHAT PATH THE GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE IN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT DIFFICULT SITUATION.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 26 AUG 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, POLICIES, ARRESTS, RELIGIOUS GROUPS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 27 JUN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** ShawDG  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975TEGUCI02768  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** 11652 GDS  
**Errors:** n/a  
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**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** ShawDG  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 03 SEP 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <15 DEC 2003 by ShawDG>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
06 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** n/a  
**TAGS:** PINS, HO, PC, CGT, NATIONAL CAMPESINO UNION  
**To:** STATE NIACT INFO GUATEMALA  
MANAGUA  
SAN JOSE  
SAN SALVADOR  
USCINCSO  
**Type:** TE

**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006